Backwardness of Bihar

1734. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the RPIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bihar is still the poorest and most backward State in the country;

(b) if so, the percentage of people living Below Poverty Line, literacy and drop-out rates; and

(c) the action taken to assist the States to come up to the National level norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) As per 2001 Census, the literacy rate in Bihar was 47.53% as compared to All India average of 65.37%. Percentage of people below poverty line in 1999-2000 in respect of undivided Bihar was 42.60% as against the All-India figure of 26.10%. Information on Dropout rates published in Selected Educational Statistics (1999-2000) for undivided Bihar *vis-a-vis* All India is given below:

Category	Drop out rate in Undivided Bihar (%)	All India Average (%)
Classes I-V	57.27	40.25
Classes I-VIII	77.62	54.53
Classes I-X	83.46	68.28

(c) Successful implementation of various programmes including Centrally Sponsored Schemes in education, rural development, social welfare, transport and other sectors by the Government of Bihar, can only help the State to come up to National level norm.

Rural income disparities

1735. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether rural income disparities across the States are widening;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and